



Posthumous and Aegrotat Award of Postgraduate Research Degrees Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy forms part of the University of Manchester's Postgraduate Research (PGR) [Code of Practice](#) and should be referred to alongside the ordinances, regulations and policies relating to the examination of PGR degrees.
- 1.2. This policy is applicable to the following full-time and part-time postgraduate research degree programmes at the University of Manchester:
 - Master's level research degrees: Master of Science (MSc) by Research; Master of Enterprise (MEnt); Master of Philosophy (MPhil).
 - Doctoral degrees: Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy by Enterprise (PhD); Doctor of Medicine (MD).
 - Doctor of Business Administration (DBA); Doctor of Clinical Psychology (ClinPsyD); Doctor in Education (EdD); Doctor in Educational and Child Psychology (DEdChPsychol); Doctor of Forensic Psychology (DForensPsy); Doctor of Engineering (EngD); Doctor of Enterprise (EntD); Doctor of Counselling Psychology (DCounsPsych); Doctor of Clinical Science (DClinSci); Doctor of Professional Management (DProfPM or DProfREAM); Doctorate in Professional Practice (DProf).
- 1.3. This policy relates to the award of a PGR degree in the event of the death of the candidate (posthumous) or the diagnosis of a terminal / debilitating illness prior to the completion of their programme (aegrotat).

2. Posthumous and Aegrotat Award Eligibility

- 2.1. A posthumous award may be recommended following the death of a candidate. Such a recommendation may be made by those responsible for overseeing the candidate's postgraduate research, including supervisory or postgraduate research support staff, or by appointed examiners where an examination has already commenced. Before any examination can proceed, written consent must be obtained from the deceased candidate's family or next of kin to confirm their support for the posthumous award.
- 2.2. An aegrotat research degree may be recommended where it is considered that a candidate's diagnosis of a terminal or debilitating illness would preclude them from making the final submission of the thesis, undertaking the oral examination, completing modifications to the thesis, or submitting a resubmission.

Such a recommendation may be made by those responsible for overseeing the candidate's postgraduate research, including supervisory or postgraduate research support staff, or by appointed examiners where an examination has already commenced. The candidate, or the candidate's family, must confirm that they will accept an aegrotat award prior to any examination.

- 2.3. The aegrotat award will be considered as the conclusion of a PGR's registration on the programme, and there will be no further re-assessment. Where the PGR is currently on a programme of study which includes a professional component, an alternative exit award may be offered; the aegrotat award will not include the professional award.
- 2.4. A PGR would normally be expected to have completed at least 50% of their programme to be considered for a posthumous or aegrotat award. However, the panel may exercise discretion to recommend an award in exceptional circumstances, where there is compelling evidence that the candidate has met the expectations of a postgraduate-level award within a shorter period of study.

3. Awards after Examination / Submission

- 3.1. Where a thesis has already been examined and a viva has already taken place (prior to death / diagnosis) the examination procedure should continue, as closely as possible, in accordance with the relevant [examination policy](#).
- 3.2. If the thesis has been submitted but not yet examined, examiners must be nominated in line with [policy](#). The examination will proceed as normal with the exception that any oral examination, corrections or revisions will not be required.
- 3.3. The examiners may make one of the following recommendations:
 - Relevant posthumous or aegrotat award
 - Relevant posthumous or aegrotat exit/lesser award
 - No award
- 3.4. The appropriate School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel will consider the examiners' recommendations and joint report and they will determine whether an award be made.¹
- 3.5. The decision by the postgraduate research degrees panel either not to grant an award or to confer an exit award does not constitute valid grounds for an academic appeal.

4. Awards before Examination / Submission

- 4.1. Where a thesis has not yet been submitted for examination the supervisor/s must consider whether there is a sufficient quantity of material to represent the thesis (a full thesis; partially complete thesis; draft thesis chapters; draft publications; any related documentation which was to have been be incorporated into the

¹ In exceptional circumstances, examiners may submit separate reports with the permission of the appropriate Doctoral Academy. Examiners who are unable to agree on a recommendation must submit separate reports.

thesis; any other supporting information e.g. progress reports). The supervisor/s must be satisfied that there is enough to permit an academic judgement to be made.

- 4.2. If, in the supervisor's professional opinion, there is insufficient work to allow for a meaningful academic assessment, this should be clearly stated to the appropriate School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel. In such instances, the panel will determine whether the process for a posthumous or aegrotat award can proceed or if no award can be considered due to lack of sufficient material.
- 4.3. For a posthumous award the main supervisor is responsible for presenting the candidate's work for consideration to the appropriate School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel as soon as reasonably practicable once the institution is notified of the death and the family is ready to engage. The main supervisor should not add to or enhance the work. The main supervisor will be required to confirm that the work is the candidate's own.
- 4.4. For an aegrotat award the candidate is responsible, where possible, for presenting their work for consideration to the appropriate School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel with support from their supervisor/s as is reasonably practicable. If the candidate is not well enough the main supervisor will prepare the work on their behalf. The main supervisor should not add to or enhance the work. The main supervisor will be required to confirm that the work is the candidate's own.
- 4.5. The main supervisor must submit a written statement of support for the posthumous or aegrotat award. This statement should: (1) confirm that the submitted work is the candidate's own and has not been added to or enhanced; (2) provide a summary of the candidate's progress to date, including the extent and quality of the work completed; and (3) outline the reasons why the supervisor believes the degree should be awarded, referencing the candidate's academic achievements and the merits of their work.
- 4.6. The compilation of the candidate's work and the supervisor report will be considered by the appropriate School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel, and if the panel is satisfied that there is a case for an award to be made, examiners will be nominated to assess the work.
- 4.7. If the decision is to proceed to examination, internal and external examiners will be appointed in line with the Nomination of Examiners & Independent Chairs for Postgraduate Research Degree Examinations Policy. The examiners must be made aware of the circumstances surrounding the submission. In addition, examiners will receive guidance and a report template is provided in (Appendix A).
- 4.8. Wherever possible, the candidate's work and all supporting documentation (including the supervisor's written statement) should be compiled into a single PDF file. This file must begin with a cover note that clearly outlines the contents and explains the materials included.
- 4.9. If it is not feasible to merge all documents into a single PDF, a separate PDF should be uploaded in eProg, detailing that the relevant documents are stored in the personal document store. All supporting documents should then be individually uploaded to the personal document store, ensuring they are clearly labelled and easily accessible.

4.10. The examiners should consider the supervisor report, the merits of the work as presented, and the candidate's potential to complete should they have been able to continue. In place of the viva, the examiners will be permitted to request additional information and/or ask questions of the supervisory team, prior to making an award recommendation via a joint examiner report. Written correspondence between examiners and supervisors is acceptable for this purpose. Meetings between examiners and the supervisory team are optional, to be arranged only if specifically requested by the examiners or supervisors.²

4.11. The examiners may make one of the following recommendations:

- Relevant posthumous or aegrotat award
- Relevant posthumous or aegrotat exit award
- No award

4.12. The appropriate School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel will consider the examiners' report/s and will determine whether an award be made.

4.13. The decision of the postgraduate research degrees panel not to make an award does not constitute grounds for an academic appeal.

5. Thesis Submission

5.1. Where an award is made, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to upload the final thesis file to eProg and to set the appropriate access settings.

5.2 If the thesis is designated as open access, it will be made immediately available on Pure. Theses with restricted access will be held in the repository until the embargo date has passed, at which point they will be released for public access.

6. Certification / Graduation

6.1. Where a posthumous or aegrotat award is made it is not required that the resulting certificate is marked as such.

6.2. In the case of a posthumous award, or where an aegrotat awardee is unable to attend, a family member or nominee may be permitted to attend a graduation ceremony to receive the award on behalf of the awardee.

² In exceptional circumstances, examiners may submit separate reports with the permission of the appropriate Doctoral Academy. Examiners who are unable to agree on a recommendation must submit separate reports.

Appendix A – Examiner Report Template

EXAMINERS' REPORT FORM – POSTHUMOUS / AEGROTAT AWARD

This report form is used for the assessment of postgraduate research work submitted for consideration for a posthumous or aegrotat award.

Examiners are asked to base their judgement on:

- *the submitted work (which may include a full or partial thesis, draft chapters, publications, or other academic material); and*
- *the formal written statement provided by the supervisor.*

There is no oral examination (viva voce) associated with posthumous or aegrotat awards. If clarification or additional information is required to support an academic judgement, examiners may submit written questions to the supervisory team. Written correspondence is the preferred approach; meetings are not required but may be arranged if specifically requested by the examiner or supervisor.

In forming a recommendation, examiners should consider whether, based on the work submitted and the supervisor's report, the candidate would have met the standard for the award had they been able to complete the programme. This includes consideration of the originality, rigour, significance, and overall quality of the research, recognising that the submission may be incomplete.

Examiners should make one clear recommendation, supported by an explicit academic rationale, selecting from:

- *award of the relevant degree (posthumous or aegrotat);*
- *award of an exit or lesser degree; or*
- *no award.*

The process should be conducted sensitively and efficiently, with due regard to the candidate's circumstances.

Examiners are required to use this report template to ensure consistency, transparency, and a clear record of the basis for the recommendation for consideration by the appropriate School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel.

Name of Candidate: _____

ID No: _____

Title of Thesis/Submitted Work: _____

Section 1 – Recommendation

Please select one:

- Award of [degree] (posthumous/aegrotat)
- Award of exit/lesser degree (please specify)
- No award

Section 2 – Review of Submitted Work

a) Summary of Supervisor's Statement

Confirm that the supervisor's statement has been reviewed and summarise the rationale for supporting the award.

b) Assessment of Submitted Work

Is there sufficient material to permit academic judgement? Does the work demonstrate the candidate's capacity for research and contribution to knowledge?

c) Clarifications Sought

Detail any clarifications requested from the supervisor and how these were addressed.

d) Recommendation Rationale

Provide a concise rationale for your recommendation.

Section 3 – Additional Comments

Any other relevant comments on the process or the case.

Section 4 – Examiner Declaration

I certify that the information given in this report is accurate and complete.

External Examiner:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Internal Examiner:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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